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Letter dated 22 July 1998 from the Permanent Representative of Austria to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to draw your attention to the statement by the President of the European Union on Nigeria issued on 22 July 1998.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly under item 113 (c) of the provisional agenda.

(*Signed*) Ernst **Sucharipa**
Permanent Representative
of Austria to the United Nations

* A/53/150.

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Annex

[Original: English and French]

Statement by the President of the European Union on Nigeria issued on 22 July 1998

The European Union welcomes the announcement made on 20 July by the Nigerian Head of State, General Abubakar, on a completely new transition programme and on his commitment to hand over power to a civilian Government in May 1999, after elections to be held under international monitoring. In this context, the Union expresses its sincere hope for a genuine and transparent path towards an inclusive democratic society and commends the promise of new electoral institutions and the intention of the military government not to interfere in the free formation of new political parties and in a free election process.

The European Union notes with great satisfaction the recent release of a further 10 political prisoners and at the same time the repeated commitment of the military government to set free all remaining political prisoners. The Union also strongly appreciates the commitment to respect for human rights, in particular freedom of expression, of peaceful assembly and of association.

The European Union finally reiterates its preparedness for a constructive political dialogue with the Nigerian authorities and its readiness to render assistance, if asked for, to the democratization process.